

CLAIMS

1) A vehicle (1) comprising a passenger compartment having a steering wheel (12) operated by the driver to
5 steer the vehicle (1); a central control unit (13) which supervises operation of active components of the vehicle (1), and modifies the operating parameters of the active components to modify the dynamic performance of the vehicle (1); and a selection device (15) which is located
10 inside the passenger compartment of the vehicle (1), and is operated by the driver to transmit a selected dynamic performance of the vehicle (1) to the central control unit (13); the vehicle (1) being characterized in that the selection device (15) comprises a switch (16) fitted
15 to the steering wheel (12) of the vehicle (1) and rotatable between at least four different positions (A, B, C, D), each corresponding to a respective dynamic performance of the vehicle (1).

2) A vehicle (1) as claimed in Claim 1, wherein the
20 switch (16) can be rotated into a first position (A) wherein the dynamic performance of the vehicle (1) is set to drive on low-grip road surfaces, a second position (B) wherein the dynamic performance of the vehicle (1) is set to drive on low-grip road surfaces in sport driving mode,
25 a third position (C) wherein the dynamic performance of the vehicle (1) is set to drive on firm-grip road surfaces in sport driving mode, and a fourth position (D) wherein the dynamic performance of the vehicle (1) is set

to drive in safe conditions in touring driving mode.

3) A vehicle (1) as claimed in Claim 2, wherein the switch (16) can be set to a fifth position (E) wherein the dynamic performance of the vehicle (1) is set to track racing mode.

4) A vehicle (1) as claimed in Claim 3, and comprising electronic driver-aid devices which are disabled when the switch (16) is set to the fifth position (E).

5) A vehicle (1) as claimed in Claim 3 or 4, wherein the switch (16) can only be set to the fifth position (E) from the third position (C) by moving the switch (16) linearly into a control position, from which the switch (16) returns automatically into the third position (C); the dynamic performance of the vehicle (1) being set according to the angular position of the switch (16) once the engine (4) of the vehicle (1) is turned off.

6) A vehicle (1) as claimed in one of Claims 2 to 5, wherein, to modify the dynamic performance of the vehicle (1), the central control unit (13) acts on a servocontrol of a gearbox (8), on an electronic control controlling the lock percentage of a self-locking differential (9), on an electronic control controlling suspension response, on an electronic control controlling the stability of the vehicle (1), and on an electronic control controlling drive and response of the engine (4).

7) A vehicle (1) as claimed in Claim 6, wherein, in the first position (A), the performance of the engine

(4), the servocontrol of the gearbox (8), and the electronic control controlling the lock percentage of the self-locking differential (9) are set for low-grip operation, while the electronic control controlling suspension response, and the electronic control controlling the stability of the vehicle (1) are set for normal operation; in the second position (B), the performance of the engine (4), the electronic control controlling suspension response, and the electronic control controlling the lock percentage of the differential (9) are set for normal operation, while the servocontrol of the gearbox (8), and the electronic control controlling the stability of the vehicle (1) are set for sport operation; in the third position (C), the performance of the engine (4), the electronic control controlling suspension response, the electronic control controlling the lock percentage, the servocontrol of the gearbox (8), and the electronic control controlling the stability of the vehicle (1) are set for sport operation; and, in the fourth position (D), the performance of the engine (4), the electronic control controlling suspension response, the electronic control controlling the lock percentage, the servocontrol of the gearbox (8), and the electronic control controlling the stability of the vehicle (1) are set for normal operation.

8) A vehicle (1) as claimed in one of Claims 1 to 7, wherein the steering wheel (12) has a recessed seat (18) housing the switch (16).

9) A vehicle (1) as claimed in Claim 8, wherein a cover (19) is provided, and is hinged to the steering wheel (12) to close the seat (18) of the switch (16).

10) A vehicle (1) as claimed in one of Claims 1 to 9, wherein the switch (16) is mounted to slide axially in opposition to elastic means, and is pressed by a user to command performance by the central control unit (13) of a racing-start procedure, if the vehicle (1) is stationary when the switch (16) is pressed.

11) A vehicle (1) as claimed in Claim 10, wherein the switch (16) may be rotated into a first position (A) wherein the dynamic performance of the vehicle (1) is set to drive on low-grip road surfaces, a second position (B) wherein the dynamic performance of the vehicle (1) is set to drive on low-grip road surfaces in sport driving mode, a third position (C) wherein the dynamic performance of the vehicle (1) is set to drive on normal-grip road surfaces in sport driving mode, and a fourth position (D) wherein the dynamic performance of the vehicle (1) is set to drive in safe conditions in touring driving mode; the racing-start procedure only being performed if, when the switch (16) is pressed, the switch (16) is in the second or third position (B, C).